



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader

July 31, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

For nearly fifty years, Title X has been a guarantor of women's basic right to health care.

I am writing to call your attention to a letter signed by many Members of Congress that contains several questions about the proposed changes of the domestic 'gag rule' that do not reflect Congressional intent for Title X. I urge you to review these questions, and to promptly provide detailed answers.

Title X was passed with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by President Nixon. This initiative has proved both overwhelmingly popular and powerfully transformative, providing vital reproductive health information and services to families and communities across the country, including more than 1 million in California alone each year. Today, it remains the only federal grant program that assures all women receive confidential, medically accurate family planning services.

The Trump Administration's proposed domestic 'gag rule' poses a clear, grave threat to that progress. If implemented, this rule would allow ideology and politics – not science – to determine the information and the health care that a woman receives from her doctor. By denying patients the comprehensive, factual information they need to make health decisions about their bodies and families and choking off access to family planning and other preventive health services, this rule poses a serious danger to women's health – particularly to the women who need Title X services the most. It is deeply concerning that the Administration is moving to sever the vital lifeline of these health services, in effect imposing substandard care on all American women.

This proposed rule change is one of many serious attacks on women's rights and health care launched over the past 18 months by the Trump Administration and Republicans in Congress. From pushing a rule to allow employers to control whether or not their birth control is covered, to waging an all-out assault on Planned Parenthood's preventive care, to cynically raising women's health premiums and sabotaging their quality health care, the GOP has shown a dismaying lack of respect for women's rights.

Members of Congress and the Administration have a responsibility to work together to protect the American people – and that means protecting women's health care. I respectfully urge you to withdraw this rule, and join us to ensure that every woman, everywhere, can enjoy her right to basic health care and affordable, vital family planning services.

Thank you for your attention to the urgent, serious concerns raised in this letter and in the letter written by my colleagues.

best regards,



NANCY PELOSI
House Democratic Leader